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VOC FOR PGM/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-6121
CHARLES WEISS/JERUSALEM

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CAMP DAVID -- ISRAEL

ANNCR:

AS THE ISRAELI DELEGATION PREPARES TO GO TO THE SUMMIT MEETING AT CAMP DAVID, NEXT WEEK, THE GOVERNMENT IS USING EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PUBLICIZE ITS VIEWS AHEAD OF TIME. FROM JERUSALEM, CHARLES WEISS SENT THIS BACKGROUND REPORT:

VOICE:

PRIME MINISTER BEGIN APPEARS OFTEN IN PUBLIC AND USUALLY HAS A MESSAGE HE'S TRYING TO GET ACROSS. THERE WERE TWO SUCH OCCASIONS THIS PAST WEEK.

JUST AFTER THE CABINET MEETING SUNDAY WHICH LAID DOWN THE GUIDELINES TO THE DELEGATION TO CAMP DAVID, THE PRIME MINISTER MET REPORTERS OUTSIDE AND GAVE AN IMPASSIONED DEFENSE OF HIS WELL-KNOWN PLAN TO GIVE LIMITED AUTONOMY TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP. "THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO TO IT," HE SAID. "IT OFFERS THE BEST CHANCE TO NEGOTIATE AND CONCLUDE PEACE TREATIES WITH THE ARABS." THE CABINET HAD, A FEW MINUTES BEFORE, UNANIMOUSLY CHARGED THE DELEGATION WITH PROMOTING THE AUTONOMY PLAN AT CAMP DAVID, AND IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THIS WAS WHAT MISTER BEGIN WANTED.

LATER IN THE WEEK HE SPOKE BEFORE A GROUP OF JEWISH FUND RAISERS FROM THE UNITED STATES, TELLING THEM ABOUT A MEETING HE HAD HAD THAT DAY WITH THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, FORMER PRIME MINISTER SHIMON PERES. HE REPORTED THAT HE AND MISTER PERES HAD AGREED ON FIVE BASIC POINTS IN ISRAEL'S FOREIGN POLICY: THAT JERUSALEM SHOULD REMAIN THE UNITED CAPITAL OF ISRAEL, THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO RETURN TO THE PRE-SIX DAY WAR BORDERS, THAT WHATEVER BORDER CHANGES ARE NEGOTIATED, CANNOT BE MINOR ONES, THAT

THE ISRAELI ARMY HAS TO REMAIN STATIONED IN THE WESTBANK AND GAZA STRIP EVEN AFTER PEACE, AND THAT IT CANNOT GIVE UP ITS POSITIONS ALONG THE JORDAN RIVER.

ACCORDING TO MISTER BEGIN, MISTER PERES' LABOR PARTY BACKING GIVES HIM THE SUPPORT OF NINETY-TWO MEMBERS OF THE KNESSET ON THESE ISSUES -- THAT IS, OVER THREE-QUARTERS OF ISRAEL'S PARLIAMENT. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT WITH THIS KIND OF ENDORSEMENT HE WILL FEEL FREE TO TAKE THIS STAND AT CAMP DAVID. ALL THIS MEANS IS THAT ISRAEL, AS REPRESENTED BY MISTER BEGIN, HAS NO INTENTION OF SATISFYING EGYPTIAN DEMANDS THAT IT WITHDRAW TOTALLY FROM THE ARAB LANDS IT OCCUPIED IN NINETEEN SIXTY-SEVEN.

IT'S N O T SURPRISING THAT THE PRIME MINISTER TENDS TO DOWN-PLAY THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUMMIT, AT LEAST IN COMPARISON TO THE DECISIVE SIGNIFICANCE ATTACHED TO IT BY THE EGYPTIANS. IN A RECENT SPEECH, MISTER BEGIN CONCEDED THAT IS INDEED A MOMENTOUS MEETING, BUT INSISTED THAT HE COULD N O T ACCEPT THE OTHER ADJECTIVES BEING BANDIED ABOUT -- THAT IT'S A FATEFUL MEETING OR A DECISIVE ONE. "THE FATE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE DOES N O T DEPEND ON ANY MEETING," HE SAID. "THERE WILL ALWAYS BE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE PEACE."

GH/RCS